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THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

INDIA

Description

A survey of the character and strength of the Indian Communist Party with an analysis of its present role in Indian politics.

August 1945

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THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

SUMMARY

The Communist Party of India today has a membership of about 25,000, which is an increase of roughly one thousand percent over the 1942 figure. The Party is strongest in Bengal, which has about one-third of the total membership; the Punjab and certain sections of South India also have large and well organized units. The Communist Party of India is composed of elements drawn from all leftist and nationalist groups which have come into existence during the past forty years. Many Communists, especially in Bengal, are ex-terrorists. Former members of the revolutionary Ghadr Party are prominent among the Punjab Communists; former Congress Socialists predominate in South India sections of the Party, and play a leading role in the United Provinces. Many Communists in all parts of India have participated in National Congress activities. The five or six top leaders of the Party have worked for the Communist movement from the days of its earliest beginnings; the leaders as a whole are young men in their thirties or forties.

The history of the Communist Party of India may be said properly to begin with year 1924. Prior to that time there had been a certain amount of activity, and propaganda in considerable quantity had reached India from European and Russian sources. By 1924 the Communist movement had reached proportions sufficient to arouse the

concern of the Government of India. Directed largely by M.N. Roy, an exile from India and a member of the Comintern, a few individuals had succeeded in building up a small group of Communists in three or four centers. The most prominent leaders were arrested in 1924 on charges of conspiracy against the King-Emperor and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. The Communists at this time had no mass basis among either peasants or laborers, and the removal of the leaders in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case, as it became known, checked for the time being the progress of Indian Communism.

In 1926 and 1927 several Englishmen were sent to India to develop and organize a militant left-wing labor movement. With the help of a few able Indians--among them the Cawnpore conspirators who were released in 1928--they succeeded to a remarkable extent. Communist activity reached a peak of intensity in 1929 not yet surpassed, and culminated in a strike wave which swept India. Once again the Government removed the leaders. The Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929 in which thirty-one persons, including three Englishmen, were arrested, was a severe blow to the movement. The remaining Communists lacked the ability to hold the movement together, and the workers were exhausted by the strikes. In 1933 all but four of the accused persons were released. They set to work with some success to reorganize and to form a central party. A Provisional Central Committee was established and some progress was made in organizing provincial units. Early in 1934, another series of strikes

instigated by the Communists broke out. The leaders were re-arrested and in the same year a ban was imposed on all Communist organizations and activities.

From 1934-42 the Communists worked underground. The most significant developments during this period were in matters of policy. About 1936 the Indian Communists, following Comintern policy, abandoned their anti-nationalist position and put forth the slogan of a united front against imperialism.

The present phase of Communist history in India begins with a radical change in policy with regard to the war. On the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, the Communists adopted an extreme anti-war position. A strike was organized in Bombay, October 1939, to demonstrate to Indian nationalists, who were thought to be wavering in their attitude, that the working class was solidly against Indian participation in the war. Subsequently large numbers of Indian Communists were arrested.

However, when the Japanese struck at southeast Asia, and invasion of India appeared imminent, the Communists declared the war to be a People's War, and strongly advocated Indian cooperation with the Allies against the common enemy. As a consequence, the Government of India removed the ban on the Party and released the leaders. The Party entered upon a period of expansion and of increasing influence.

The long term policy of the Communist Party calls for the overthrow of the present government of India and the establishment of a

federation of socialist soviet republics. However, with the decision to collaborate with Indian nationalists of all shades of political opinion in the struggle against imperial domination, the Communists for the time being abandoned their extreme revolutionary goal. Since 1937 the program of the Party has stressed moderation and achievement of immediate objectives. A manifesto issued on Indian Independence Day, 26 January 1940, put forth three slogans: for a democratic republic with a People's Army; for the eight-hour day and a living wage; for freedom from rack-renting and debt slavery.

Since 1932 the Communists have generally supported the government's war effort although they have not ceased propaganda for independence and have taken the view that only a national government can fully mobilize India behind the war. They have worked to make a success of the grow-more-food campaign and to popularize the rationing of food and clothing.

The Communists have utilized their freedom, since 1942, in efforts to build up a strong, centralized labor organization. Interest in labor as a means of achieving their revolutionary goal dates back to the early days of the Communist movement. During the years 1929-38, Communist activity in the field of labor organization was one of the forces which brought about internal dissension in the labor movement. One important result of the united front policy adopted by the Communist Party about 1936 was the trade union unity established in

1938, when left-wing and right-wing unions combined to form one central, all-India organization, the All-India Trade Union Congress. Communist influence in the AITUC has greatly increased since 1942. Party members form a substantial proportion of the representatives in the AITUC and exercise control over a number of important unions in key industries. According to a 1943 analysis of the Communist Party, workers formed twenty-six percent of the total membership.

Although the Communists have for many years laid great stress on the need for agrarian reform and the organization of peasant committees, it is only in the recent phase of their history that Communists have played an outstanding role in the Indian peasant movement. At the present time the movement is largely under their control. In December 1944, twenty-two of the twenty-five members of the general council of the All-India Kisan Sabha (Peasant Association) were Communists. Conversely, about thirty-six percent of the membership of the Communist Party are peasants.

During the latter part of 1944, the president of the All India Kisan Sabha, a non-Communist who controls the Bihar provincial peasant organization, one of the largest in India, resigned from the All-India Kisan Sabha as a result of disagreement in regard to matters of Communist Party policy. Other non-Communist peasant leaders are also working under the Constructive Program of the National Congress to build up an organization to rival the All-India Kisan Sabha. It appears probable that the Communist-controlled organization will be considerably

weakened as a result of these developments.

Until 1936 when the Communists adopted a united front policy, they regarded the Indian National Congress as an agent of imperialism and feudal reaction, and accused its leaders of betraying the national struggle. However, the united front policy resulted in a change of attitude toward the Congress. In 1937, the Communist Party supported Congress candidates in the elections, and, during the years in which Congress ministers held office, the Party continued its support although it criticized certain aspects of the Congress parliamentary program. In 1939 a considerable number of Communists were elected members of the All-India Congress Committee.

As a result of their People's War policy, the Communists opposed the "Quit India" resolution adopted by the Congress in August 1942, and since that time many Congressmen have regarded the Communists as traitors to the cause of independence. For this reason, and also because the Communists have supported the Muslim League plan for Pakistan, it seems possible that in the future Congressmen and Communists will not collaborate.

Because the Communists have, since 1930, proclaimed the right of national minorities to self-determination, and because they are convinced that Indian Independence cannot be achieved until the Congress and the League unite on a common program of action, the Communist Party has recognized the Muslim League's demand for a separate state and has consistently endeavoured by means of extensive

propaganda to convince Congressmen of the justice of this demand. The leaders of the Muslim League do not regard the Communists with favor in spite of their support of Pakistan, and there have been attempts recently to prohibit Communists from holding office in League organizations. Except in the Punjab, relatively few Communists are members of the League.

Political and economic developments, both in India and throughout Asia, will determine whether or not India Communism will continue to grow. So long as India's status as a British possession remains unchanged, Indian Communism will have to compete with Nationalism for popular support as in the past. If the Nationalists accept British terms for a settlement of the constitutional issue and remain within the Empire, the United Front will no longer serve Communist purposes. In this case, the Communists will probably revert to their pre-1936 position, according to which Nationalist leaders were condemned as enemies of the people second only to British imperialists. They will attempt to rally all the forces of the Left either to overthrow the new government or to compel it to effect socialism. But this government will probably be composed of Rightist elements, and Communist activities will once again be severely restricted.

This study does not attempt to discuss relations between the Indian Communist Party and Communist organizations in other countries. In more broad perspective, events in China, and Russian foreign policy, are likely to determine the future of Communism in India.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

I. HISTORY OF THE INDIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

A. Early History

The Communist Party of India as it exists today -- a strong, centralized, well-disciplined organization with rapidly increasing membership and considerable influence in labor unions and peasant associations--has its roots in a communist movement dating back to 1920.

Communism in India owes its origin and early development to impetus from foreign sources. As a result of Russian interest in India as the keystone of the British Empire, and efforts of the Communist International to foment revolutionary activities in Asia, India, in the years following the World War, became one of the chief Asiatic targets of Communist propaganda. At Samarkand and Tashkent, where training schools had been established, Indians in considerable number received instruction in the ideology and tactics of Communism. For some years the principal link between the Comintern and Indian Communists was M.N. Roy, an exile from India. In Germany at the close of the World War, he established connections with international Communists and as a member of the presidium of the Comintern exercised considerable influence in shaping policies on colonial questions. From this position he acted as intermediary between the Comintern and Indian Communists and to a large extent directed activities in India.

The Vanguard, central organ of the Communist Party of India, was edited and published by Roy in Berlin. He was also the author of numerous Communist books and pamphlets. Members of the Communist Party of Great Britain also served as agents for propaganda and acted in an organizational capacity. Shapurji Saklatvala, Indian communist member of the House of Commons for several terms between 1922 and 1929, was responsible for sending manifestos and propaganda to India. In 1926 and 1927 three English Communists, George Allison, Ben Bradley and Phillip Spratt went to India where they worked chiefly to organize labor unions.

In India, general conditions of unrest and growing political consciousness provided fertile soil not only for nationalism but also for the development of socialist ideas. The Communist movement gained some adherents, chiefly in the urban centers of Bombay, Bengal, and the United Provinces. By 1924 the movement was considered sufficiently important for drastic action. The Government of India arrested the principal leaders and sentenced them to 4 years' imprisonment on charges of conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. As a result of this action Communist activity decreased.

The first Communist Party of India was formed in 1924 while the Cawnpore Conspirators were in jail. Satya Bhakta, a pacifist and a non-Marxist, was the guiding spirit behind this organization but it

lacked funds and needed outside support which it could not obtain while under his leadership. Before long Bhakta was forced to resign and the party was gradually "transformed into a body owing allegiance to the Comintern."[1]

With the arrival in 1926-27 of several British agitators who were sent out to revive the movement, Communism again began to gain strength. Workers' and peasants' parties came into existence in several provinces, notably Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and the United Provinces. For some time efforts were centered on these organizations at the expense of the Communist Party of India, but at a Conference of the Party held in 1928 at Calcutta a new central executive was elected and it was resolved to undertake extensive propaganda and to build up the membership. The Party's object was stated to be "the attainment of socialism...in accordance with the programme of the Comintern and the policy adopted from time to time by the Party with the agreement of the Communist International."[2]

The chief emphasis during these years was placed on the development of a militant left-wing labor movement. The English Communists, and, after their release in 1928 the Indian leaders, set to work to organize factory laborers and to form radical trade unions. To a large extent they were successful. In 1928-29 a series of strikes broke out in various parts of India. As a result the government once

1 CID #121739, p. 134
2 Ibid., p. 134

again arrested the Communist leaders. The famous Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929 arose over the arrest of 31 labor leaders -- not all Communists -- who were charged with conspiring to overthrow the Government of India by use of methods and a plan of action ordained by the Communist International. The trial dragged on for three and a half years and dealt a heavy blow to the Communist movement. Although the heavy sentences imposed at the end of the trial were reduced on appeal, none of the accused was released until August 1933 and the most prominent were not set free until one or two years later.

The few Communists who remained after the Meerut arrests did their best to hold the organization together and to build up an underground organization. In 1930 a Draft Program of Action was issued outlining the Communist objectives.[1] But it was not until the release of the Meerut prisoners in 1933 that any progress was made. A meeting was held at Calcutta in November 1933 at which the members decided to form themselves into the nucleus of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. Plans were drawn up for reorganization and increase in membership. Some of the immediate aims decided on indicate the state of the Party at this time: Bengal was directed to strive for a membership of fifty within six months, while more backward provinces were to form "kernels" of five or six "wholehearted" workers. A description of the Indian Communist

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1 See Appendix II

organization in 1933 states that "we have very good groups of comrades in several towns. In some places these groups exist legally, the police know them; therefore it is very difficult to carry on real communist work. Some of the Comrades work in the trade unions; occasionally, very seldom, they publish leaflets, but they do not represent a party."[1]

In 1934, declaring that the Communist Party "has for its object interference with the administration of the law and with the maintenance of law and order and that it contributes a danger to public peace" the Government of India placed a ban on all Communist organizations.[2] From that time until 1942 the Communists worked underground.

During the years from 1934 to 1942 the Party managed not only to survive but to increase its membership from about 150 to over 2,500. This growth was due to several factors. In the early thirties a number of ex-terrorists were converted to Communism, and especially in Bengal, contributed to the growth of the Communist Party. Members of the Ghadr (Revolution) Party, a number of them Russian agents, were active in North India. Towards the end of the period considerable numbers of Congress Socialists joined the Communist Party.

Little is known of the organization as such during these years. Communist activities in the field of labor and peasant organization are discussed elsewhere.[3]

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1 Orgwald, Tactical and Organizational Questions of the Communist Parties of India and Indo-China, 1933, p. 14
2 London Times, 27 July 1934
3 See Sections F, G

When war broke out in 1939 the Communists, declaring it to be an imperialist war, agitated strongly against India's participation. Congress leaders were accused of being "hesitant," "wavering," of "adopting dilatory tactics and going in for negotiations with the Viceroy."[1] To convince Congress that the working classes would support a policy of non-ccoperation and stand "solidly behind every struggle for attaining freedom," the Communists organized a one-day strike in Bombay in October 1939. In March 1940 the Government of India issued orders for detention of Communist leaders under Defense of India rules.[2]

With the entry of the Soviet Union into the war, the Indian Communists distinguished between the Russian "peoples' war" and the British "imperialist war," and continued their policy of obstruction. However, when Japan attacked in Southern Asia, and invasion of India became a possibility, the Communists reversed their former policy, declared that Britain was also fighting a peoples' war, and declared themselves in favor of India's cooperation. In July 1942 the government of India removed the ban on Communist organizations and released a great many of the party leaders.

B. The Communist Party, 1942-45

1. Membership

In the years since 1942 the Communists have taken advantage of the removal of the ban to consolidate their position and to develop a well-knit,

1 Labour Monthly, December 1939, p. 727
2 London Times, 26 March 1940

centralized organization. At the base are local and district groups; provincial committees coordinate the work throughout the provinces; and the all-India Committee, with headquarters in Bombay, forms the central body. Once a year an all-India conference, with delegates elected by various provincial committees, meets in Bombay.

It is difficult to estimate the figure for party membership in August 1942; Communist reports on the subject are not altogether trustworthy. The Bengal Provincial Communist Committee claimed to have had 900 members when the ban was removed.[1] Since Bengal has consistently had the largest membership, roughly one-third of the total for all-India, this would place the entire party membership at 2,700. Even this probably exceeds the actual figure. Statements that the party emerged from the underground in 1942 with 5,000 members should be regarded as exaggerated. Nevertheless, even if it is assumed that the party numbered only 2,000 in August 1942 this shows an increase of 1,000 percent. Some facts relating to the 139 delegates to the first all-India Communist Conference in 1943 indicate that 72 delegates had joined the party between the years 1934-39. It seems permissible to assume that the general party membership would show the same proportion. It was during this period that the Communist Party advocated a united front with nationalist groups against imperialism, and it is probable that this policy gained for the party some support among

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1 People's War, 4 April 1943

Congressmen. Furthermore the years 1937-39, during which Congress held office in the provinces, witnessed a political awakening which very likely led to an increase in Communist Party membership as well as in other political parties.

With the removal of the ban on Communist activities, the party entered a period of rapid expansion. The statement made by P.C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Party, that there were over 9,000 members in April 1943 is probably substantially correct.[1] Bengal at that time claimed to have 3,000.[2] By March 1944, according to report, the membership had increased to 25,000.[3] Present day membership, though the figure has been placed as high as 40,000, is probably not much over 25,000. In January 1945 Bengal claimed a membership of 9,000.[4] Assuming that the proportion of the Bengal party to the rest of India has not undergone recent alteration, the total membership cannot be over 27,000.

Granting that this is correct, and that 2,700 represents a more or less accurate approximation of the membership in 1942, the party has multiplied ten times in less than three years. This indicates a solid core and excellent methods of organization. Party leaders at

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1 People's War, 11 April 1943
2 People's War, 4 April 1943
3 The Hindu, 5 March 1944
4 People's War, 7 January 1945

the center and in all provincial branches are men of long experience in political work. Two of them, S.A. Dange and Muzaffar Ahmed were among the four men imprisoned in connection with the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case in 1924. Seven of the most prominent Communist leaders today were charged in the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929. A few top men of the Party have been trained in Russia or Europe. Many in the key positions have had considerable experience in labor unions and the peasant movement. Among the provincial leaders are a number who have held important positions in the National Congress organization. About 2,000 members are full time party workers on a salary of Rs. 25 ($8) per month. In Bombay these workers live in a communal settlement with dormitories and a common mess.

Action taken by the Central Committee shortly after the removal of the ban is apparently largely responsible for the rapid growth of membership. In September 1942 the Central Committee put forth the slogan of a mass Communist Party. "It was found that old inhibitions still prevented the Party from enrolling the best militants and active elements."[1] The Bengal Provincial Committee decided in accordance with this aim to "remove all unnecessary barriers and throw open party membership to all honest elements who have proved their worth. The various gradations that existed in Bengal and were perhaps necessary at one time now acted only as barriers against rapid expansion of the

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1 People's War, 4 April 1943

party and it was decided to remove them."[1] Presumably other provincial committees took the same steps. It is not known what are the qualifications or obligations of membership. Reference occasionally made to party candidates suggests that a period of training is essential.

Another factor in the growth of the Communist Party was the eclipse suffered by the Indian National Congress with the imprisonment of its leaders in August 1942. The negative policy offered to the country by the Congress in a time of crisis was unsatisfactory to many. The left-wing of the National Congress, the Congress Socialist Party, in certain sections of the country contributed large numbers of the Communist Party in 1942. Especially in South India, in Andhra, Kerala and Karnatak, former members of the Congress Socialist Party who had previously differed from the Communists on matters of method rather than of aim, disagreed with the militant, anti-war policy adopted by the Socialist leaders and joined the Communists in support of the war.

The legalization of the Party likewise lifted a bar against growth of membership. An underground organization relying on strict discipline is necessarily limited in number. Removal of the ban permitted the Communists to work openly and at the same time attracted to the Party elements disinclined to enter an illegal organization.

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1 Ibid.

The Government of India, however, has kept a watchful eye on Communist activities. Arrests are not uncommon. Between August 1942 and June 1943, three hundred were imprisoned.[1] Large numbers of Communists, some of them serving life sentences, are still in jail.

2. Composition of Membership

It is not possible to analyze in detail the membership of the Communist Party in terms of class status, caste, sex, or religious group. According to the only available analysis, workers form 26 percent of the total membership; peasants, 36 percent; students, 11 percent; women, 5 percent.[2] The remaining 22 percent are presumably drawn from the intelligentsia. Some additional facts are revealing. At the first all-India conference of the Party in 1943, 139 delegates attended. Eighty-six were members of the intelligentsia; all of these had had experience in mass movements. Twenty-two workers and twenty-five peasants were among the delegates. There were three landlords, two petty landlords, and one trader. Thirteen of the delegates were women. There were forty-eight matriculates and fifty-seven graduates. Not one of the delegates was illiterate, though some had learned to read and write after joining the Party. As for religious grouping the great majority were Hindus. In addition there were thirteen Muslims; eight Sikhs; three Untouchables; two Parsis; one Christian and one Jain.[3] The delegates included 80-year old Baba Sohan Singh

1 People's War, 6 June 1943
2 People's War, 4 July 1943
3 People's War, 13 June 1943

Bhakhna and a 16 year old boy from Malabar, organizer of children's groups. For the most part the leaders are men in the thirties or forties. Sixty-eight percent of the delegates were below 35.[1]

The composition of the provincial Communist committees differs from province to province. In Bengal for example, women form a larger proportion than in the all-India membership. In Andhra peasants predominate, while workers form a small minority. The Punjab Party is likewise largely a peasant organization; until recently most of the work has been carried on in Sikh districts and Muslim peasants have not been greatly affected. Bengal has the largest provincial committee with about one-third of the total membership for all India. Andhra and Kerala also have strong organizations. In Bombay, Gujerat and Sind Party members are not numerous; in spite of the fact that Communists, from 1928, had taken an active part in labor union activities in Bombay the party membership in June 1943 was only 450.[2] Bengal, where the Communists have made considerable headway, has had for many years a comparatively weak Congress Party. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence there came into conflict with the old terrorist tradition and farmer terrorists found Communism more congenial; about one-half of Bengal's delegates to the first all-India Communist Conference were former terrorists.[3] Each of the Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930)

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1 People's War, 16 May 1943
2 People's War, 6 June 1943
3 People's War, 13 June 1943

prisoners who is still active in political life--90 in all--is a member of the Communist Party; many of them were converted by Communists with whom they came into contact while in prison.[1]

In spite of severe repression the Communists have succeeded in gaining a foothold in several Indian States. Little information is available regarding the strength of Communist parties in the States; the fact that such parties exist is itself significant. Communists seem to be most numerous in the Central Indian States where they are active particularly among the mill-workers in urban centers. At Ujjain in the State of Gwalior, Communists led a strike of textile workers for dearness allowance.[2] In Baroda, activities of the Communists in certain industries led Baroda State Federation of Mills and Industries to urge the State authorities to declare the Communist Party of Baroda illegal. Indore also has a Communist Committee.[3] In South India the Communists have made some progress in Travancore and Cochin. Communists in Cochin claim to have organized unions among tile workers, saw-mill workers, toddy-tappers and textile workers. By October 1942 a children's group of 200 had been organized.[4] Mysore and Hyderabad also have small Communist committees. In 1943 a Communist was Vice-President of the Nizam's State Railwaymen's Union.[5] Ravi Narayan Reddi, a Communist peasant leader was President of the

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1 People's War, 23 May 1943
2 People's War, 20 September 1942
3 Several prominent Communists have taken a leading role in people's movement in the Indian states of Kathiawar.
4 People's War, 18 October 1942
5 People's War, 6 June 1943

1944 annual session of the Andhra Mahasabha, one of the three main peoples' organizations in the State of Hyderabad.[1] The Communists in Indian States have continually struggled against a repressive state policy. Much of the Communist work, even recently, has been carried on underground.

In addition to the regular party organizations there are various subsidiary organizations controlled by the Communists. Among these is the All-India Students Federation with a membership in May 1943 of 52,000.[2] In January 1943 a central training school was held for Communist student leaders from all parts of India.[3] Women's organizations under Communist sponsorship have been formed in many provinces. In Andhra, 6,000 women were enrolled in 124 local unions according to a report of April 1943.[4] The Andhra Provincial Committee of the Communist Party opened a permanent training center at which women who are prepared to take up political work receive a month's training. Students are instructed in principles of maternity and child welfare, personal hygiene and sanitation, elementary politics, political geography, public speaking and debate.[5] In Bengal 89 women's associations with a total membership of 5,975 had been organized by March 1943 under the direction of 139 women members of the Bengal Provincial Committee.[6]

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1 People's War, 11 June 1943
2 People's War, 25 July 1943
3 People's War, 14 March 1943
4 People's War, 18 April 1943
5 Ibid.
6 People's War, 21 March 1943

In July 1943 the Communists claimed to have organized 41,000 women in women's organizations.[1]

Considerable attention has been paid to work among young children. A Children's Brigade inaugurated in Calcutta in April 1943 started with 200 members aged 14 and under who paid dues of one anna (2¢) per month. Ten members form a branch organization. Activities include patrolling of food queues, indoor and outdoor games, and weekly discussions on current affairs where they hear stories of Russian and Chinese children.[2] The organization is linked with the Calcutta Students Federation. In both women's and children's organizations considerable emphasis has been placed on such group activities as singing. Singing squads composed of young children are used as an effective propaganda medium. According to a report of 1943, 9,000 children were enrolled in Communist-sponsored organizations.[3]

Communists play an important role in such leftist, non-political organizations as the Friends of the Soviet Union, a society formed to promote cultural relations between India and the Soviet Union; the Progressive Writers' Association; and the India Peoples' Theater Association.

3. Publications

The principal organ of the Communist Party is People's War,

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1 People's War, 4 July 1943
2 People's War, 9 May 1943
3 People's War, 4 July 1943

published in Bombay with editions in English, Marathi, Hindi, Gujerati and Urdu. Until July 1943 the paper was edited by P.C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Party. At that time G. Adhikari, the present editor, took over the position. Recent circulation figures are not available. In March 1943, 34,000 copies, including all editions, were published. The following table lists the provincial distribution of subscribers and agency sales for the English edition alone.[1] In view of the large increase in membership since 1943, these figures should probably be doubled or trebled in estimating present-day circulation.

Province	Subscribers	Agency Sales
Andhra	524	1,286
Assam	41	409
Behar	53	560
Bengal	494	3,549
Bombay	232	602
Central Province and Berar	38	208
Central Indian States	15	59
Delhi	85	370
Gujerat	125	113
Karnatak	44	390
Kerala	40	1,039
Maharastra	93	292
Orissa	8	131
Punjab	258	827
Sind	61	40
Tamilnad	127	946
United Provinces	179	692
	2,417	11,513

The Party also publishes weeklies in eleven of the principal languages of India. Janayuddha, the Bengali paper, had a circulation of 8,000 in August 1942, which increased to 13,500 by April 1943.[2]

1 People's War, 28 March 1943
2 People's War, 4 April 1943

Prajasakti, the Andhra Communist weekly, in July 1944 had a circulation of 6,000.[1] In May 1943 it was estimated that altogether Communist weeklies reached 70,000 buyers.

The Communist press also publishes numerous pamphlets and acts as distributor for foreign Communist literature.

II. THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND PRESENT-DAY INDIAN POLITICS

A. Communist Policy and Program

Indian Communists, since legalization of the Party, have ignored the more revolutionary aspects of their program and concentrated on the immediate problems facing the country. The Manifesto issued on May Day 1943, calls on all Communists to vow to defend India; to fight the Fifth Column; to win Gandhiji's release; to work for Congress-League unity; to get food for the people; and "to win a national government of defense and freedom."[2]

Indian independence has been a Communist objective since the Party's inception. However, the advocacy of revolutionary means to achieve this has been succeeded at least temporarily by emphasis on constitutional methods. Since the British Government is pledged to recognize a constitution drawn up by Indians and acceptable to the major groups, Communists have sought to bring about a settlement between Congress and the Muslim League. The necessity of agreement

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1 People's War, 2 July 1944
2 People's War, 25 April 1943

between these two parties regarding the future of India has been a constant propaganda theme.

With the possibility of a Japanese invasion of India the Communists, especially in 1942 and the first half of 1943, mobilized their resources behind the war effort. Acts of sabotage in the days of unrest following the August 1942 resolution of the National Congress were strongly condemned as Fifth Column treachery, and the Congress Socialist Party, in certain parts of the country particularly active in sabotage; was vehemently denounced by the Communists. Efforts to popularize the war have taken the form largely of publicizing the exploits of Russian and Chinese soldiers and guerrillas; the underground movements in various Eruopean countries have also received great publicity in the Communist press. Communists, in agreement with the majority of Indians regardless of party affiliation, have taken the view that only a national government can fully mobilize India behind the war. While generally supporting the Government's war effort, the Communists have exercised caution in participating in official National War Front activities. They have done little to encourage recruitment in the Indian Army. The first all India conference of the Communist Party sent patriotic greetings to Indian soldiers ("their example will show the peoples of the United Nations what an India with her 400 millions fully mobilized under her own

national government could do;"[1] and a resolution was passed calling on the party to popularize the army as the defender of India and to give it support ("to sneer at the lack of patriotism in the Indian soldier is to laugh at our own failure to establish a National Government."[2] Communists have not served on Provincial War Front Committees or Air Raid Precaution squads. They have engaged in very little propaganda in connection with the war loan program.

On the other hand, the Communists have supported the Government's campaign to increase food production and the rationing of food and cloth. In the Bengal famine of 1943-44 Communists took a large part in organizing peoples' food committees and in famine relief work of various kinds. When rationing of food and cloth was put into effect they undertook to patrol queues and to educate the people in the mechanism of rationing. No other group has done more to popularize government measures in this respect. In numerous villages peasants have been encouraged under Communist leadership to release their surplus stocks in order to relieve the shortage, and to undertake increased cultivation. Cooperative agricultural projects carried out in certain areas, notably in North Bihar and South India, though isolated instances and on a small scale, are among the achievements of the Communists. In the field of labor the Communists have stressed the necessity of keeping up and increasing production, and maintaining

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1 People's War, 6 June 1943
2 People's War, 13 June 1943

transportation. While backing workers' demands for dearness allowances, Communists have discouraged industrial disputes and strikes.

B. Communists in Local and Provincial Administration

In the last general elections (held in 1937) to provincial legislative assemblies, Communists won seats in Bombay, Bengal and the Punjab. In Bombay the Communist candidate was elected on the Red Flag Communist ticket with Congress support; in Bengal the Communist candidates ran on the Congress ticket. Out of a total of eight seats reserved for Labor in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Communists won three; all of these were seats reserved for Factory Labor. In the Punjab Legislative Assembly the three Communists, one a woman, represent rural Sikh constituencies and reflect Communist influence among the peasantry rather than among workers. In both Bengal and the Punjab, Communist members of the legislatures participate as members of the Congress Parliamentary Party, which is in a minority in both Provinces. Sardar Sohan Singh Josh, Punjab Communist, is Chief Whip of the Congress Party in the Assembly.[1]

In the 1944 elections to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, Communists won both of the seats reserved for Labor, and received 21,005 out of a total of 28,371 workers' votes cast. Bombay Corporation also has one Communist member.

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1 E. M. S. Namdoedripad, a former Congress Socialist who joined the Communist Party in 1940, is a member of the Legislative Assembly in Madras.

C. The Communist Party and the Indian National Congress

1. Early Relations

In formulating their "official" policy towards the National Congress, Indian Communists have followed the lines laid down by the Communist International. Until 1935 Communists regarded Gandhi and other Congress leaders as agents of imperialism and feudal reaction, as disorganizers of the mass movement, and, because they "deceived the Indian people" and "repeatedly betrayed the national struggle," as the greatest menace to the proletarian revolution. According to the Communist point of view, the Indian bourgeoisie, merchants and industrial capitalists for the most part, worked to bring an end to British imperialism only in order to exploit India for their own benefit. "Through its political organ, the Indian National Congress, the Indian bourgeoisie has carried on this counter-revolutionary policy....the revolutionary upsurge of the Indian masses grew apace from 1928 onwards and to control this movement the Congress placed itself nominally at the head under the reactionary slogans of boycott, khaddar [homespun] and non-violence, and at certain stages, when forced to it, a call for no-tax campaign. But this taking over of the leadership of the rising revolutionary wave was only to serve the ends of the bourgeoisie and not of the workers and peasants.

"In this respect it served two purposes--the Indian bourgeoisie feared the rising revolutionary wave of the masses as much as British

imperialism; it was this fear that decided the Congress to place itself at the head of the movement to sidetrack, localize, disorganize and, finally, betray the revolutionary struggle. At the same time the Indian bourgeoisie felt that while it held the reins in its hands of the rising mass discontent and revolutionary upsurge it would be able to use it as a means of exerting pressure upon British imperialism with a view to making a favorable bargain for itself. Its fears, however, of the rising revolutionary tempo of the masses has always been too great to allow it to make much use of its position, for in spite of the fact that it had the leadership it has time and again withdrawn that leadership when it felt that the masses were about to overstep the limits set by it."[1]

The leftist movement within Congress, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, which began to take shape around 1931, was regarded with particular distrust: "...dreams of a 'Leftist Nationalism,' to be achieved through the Congress or in association with the Congress leadership (J. Nehru, Bose, etc.) are not only idle dreams; they are direct assistance of the national bourgeoisie in its role against the masses. For it is an essential part of this role that there must be a 'Left' as well as a 'Right'; there must be a 'Left' to maintain the line of contact with the masses, to talk revolutionary language, to talk the language of youth, to talk socialist language, to hold out infinite promises even of a 'Workers' and Peasants' Republic,' while the practical policy remains safe in the hands of the

1 Ben Bradley, "The Background in India," Labour Monthly, March 1934, p. 176.

bourgeoisie, and after exploiting the struggle of the masses for its purposes, drives its resultant bargain with imperialism....The role of the 'Left Nationalists' thus becomes a primary role in the task of deceiving and disorganizing the masses."[1]

The Congress Socialist Party which came into existence in 1934 as the organized Left Wing of the National Congress was similarly condemned: "They criticise the Congress leadership up to a point, but when it is a question of following a real revolutionary line of anti-imperialist struggle we find them in effect, doing exactly the same as the Right-Wing of the Congress. The Congress Socialists want the establishment of a 'Socialist Society,' but not a Workers' and Peasants' Republic; they believe in class-war, but to be waged by 'peaceful and legitimate means'; they are for 'mass action,' but not in 'mass action culminating in a general strike and non-payment of taxes, rent and debt charges'...."[2]

However, following the rise of fascism in Europe the Comintern worked to establish a united front with socialists and other left groups. With regard to colonial and semi-colonial countries the 7th World Congress of the Comintern stated that: "...the most important task facing the Communists consists in working to establish an anti-imperialist peoples' front. For this purpose it is necessary to draw the widest masses into the national liberation movement against growing imperialist exploitation, against cruel enslavement, for the driving out of the imperialists, for the independence of the country; to

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1 R.P. Dutt, "Editorial Notes of the Month," Labour Monthly, May 1931
2 M. Muzaffar, "India's Fight against the India Bill," Labour Monthly, May 1935

to take an active part in the mass anti-imperialist movements headed by the national reformists and strive to bring out joint action with the national-revolutionary and national-reformist organizations on the basis of a definite anti-imperialist platform."[1] This policy was reflected in India by a radical change in attitude towards the National Congress. Communists declared that "The National Congress has undoubtedly achieved a gigantic task in uniting wide forces of the Indian people for the national struggle, and remains today the principal existing mass organization of many divers elements seeking national liberation. Nothing should be allowed to weaken the degree of unity that has been achieved through the National Congress...."[2] Instead of condemning the Congress as bourgeois and reactionary, Communists adopted a policy of constructive criticism. Various changes in the Congress Constitution were recommended: compulsory non-violence as a qualification for membership was censored as an obstacle to unity of the Peoples' Front; amendment of the constitution to permit affiliation of trade unions and peasant associations was advocated; Congress was urged to link with the political struggle, the demands of workers and peasants for their vital needs.

When in 1937 Congress decided to contest the first elections held under the Indian Cohstitution of 1935, Communists, generally speaking, supported the Congress candidates. The sweeping victory of

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1 International Press Correspondence, vol. 15, no. 43, 7 September 1935
2 R. P. Dutt and Ben Bradley, "The Anti-Imperialist Peoples' Front in India," Labour Monthly, March 1936

Congress at the polls was said by Communists to "mark the beginning of a new period....In the Indian National Congress the masses see the mighty front of struggle against their main enemies--the foreign imperialists and the anti-national capitalists and zamindars."[1]

During the years 1937-39 while Congress Ministries were in power in provincial assemblies, the Communists continued their united front policy, but at the same time the Party took its stand against the tendency of the Ministries, especially marked in certain provinces, to compromise with vested interests in issues involving peasant and labor legislation. The most notable instance of this dual policy of the Communists occured in Bombay, November 1938, in connection with the Bombay Trade Disputes Bill, passed by the Provincial Legislative Assembly. According to its critics the effect of this Bill was "to restrict the freedom of the trade union movement, and render direct action of the workers almost impossible."[2] Moderate labor leaders joined with Communists in condemning the Bill. Under the leadership of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress and Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party, the workers of Bombay staged a one-day protest strike against the Bill. The strike was hailed by the National Front, Communist weekly, as a smashing victory, but the peper insisted that "...the strike is not a victory against the Congress. It is a victory

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1 Ben Bradley, "India: The Haripura Session," Labour Monthly, April 1938

2 Ben Bradley, "Indian Workers' One-Day Strike," Labour Monthly, January 1939

for working-class unity, a victory for the same principles fighting for which the Congress has grown, and therefore a victory for the Congress in the truest sense of the word....It was a victory over those who in the interest of enemies of the people seek to divide the popular forces, who disrupt the unity of the Congress by their attacks on the working class....The strike must act as unifier of the national forces. The suicidal ministerial policy of concessions to vested interests and upholding police firing in the name of non-violence must be reversed. Adherence to Truth demands admission of the overwhelming success of the strike. The Black Bill whose condemnation the working class has written with its blood must be withdrawn. The unity of the people which has been achieved under the banner of the Congress must not be allowed to be disrupted."[1]

In the internal struggles between left and right factions within the Congress, which culminated in the re-election of Subhas Bose to the Congress Presidency in 1939, against the expressed wishes of Gandhi, and his resignation under pressure shortly afterwards, the Communists took the view that in the interests of unity, support must be given to the majority faction composed of rightist and moderate elements in the Congress leadership.

When the All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay, August 1942, the Communist Party had already been legalized, although many

1 Ibid.

of the most prominent Party leaders had not yet been released. In opposition to the "quit India" resolution adopted by the Committee, the Communist members advocated Congress-League unity and a joint front against the enemy, "to launch a country-wide campaign of peoples' mass mobilization demanding immediate transfer of power and the installation of provisional national Government, to inspire and instruct the masses in the spirit of national resistance, to organize peoples' defence, coordinating it where possible with similar efforts of the Government wherever they serve the interests of the people and resisting them where they are coercive."[1]

Since 1942 the Communists have carried on unceasingly a campaign for release of the Congress leaders. Acts of sabotage following the August resolution have been attributed by Communists to the Congress Socialist Party who are termed Subhas Bose's fifth columnists, and the Congress leaders' denial of responsibility for the disturbances has been put forth as basis for the demand that they be released.

2. Communist Influence

The extent to which Communists have influenced the development of the National Congress may be briefly discussed. From very early days Communists have been members of the Congress organization, and many have held important posts in Provincial Congress Committees. In August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee included 50 Communist

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1 People's War, 16 August 1942

members. That the Indian National Congress, always, by Communist standards, an essentially conservative and even reactionary organization, has displayed a consistent trend towards economic and social liberalism, and an increasingly positive stand on the issue of national independence, is probably due in part to pressure from Communist elements within the organization, in part to the necessity of counteracting the influence of the Communist Party, and in part--perhaps in largest part--to the success of the Soviet experiment and the consequent effectiveness of Communist ideology.

Certain measures effecting broad policy adopted by Congress from time to time may or may not be indicative of Communist influence. However, in several important instances, action taken by the Congress followed, sometimes after a short interval, policy statements made by the Communists and developments in their program. The Karachi resolution, for example, adopted by the All-India Congress Session in 1931, which outlined Congress policy with regard to fundamental rights and duties, affairs of labor, taxation and expenditure, and set forth an economic and social program for the country, followed the Draft Program of Action issued by the Communists in 1930. The Karachi resolution is by no means socialistic except for the declaration that "the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, water ways, shipping and other means of public transport;" provisions affecting

labor and the peasantry are of a mildly reformist character. What is significant is the fact that the Karachi resolution is the first attempt of the Congress to face and deal with social and economic issues.

The demand for a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise to frame India's constitution affords another instance in which Communist policy anticipated the Congress program. The Communist Party of India first proposed the convocation of a constituent assembly in 1928. A resolution to the same effect was passed by Congress in 1934; it remains a cornerstone of the Congress program.

It was in 1929, following two years of intense activity on the part of the Communists in organizing labor, that the All-India Congress Committee decided to open a Labour Research Department as a branch of the A.I.C.C. office. It has been suggested that the civil disobedience movement, inaugurated in 1931, purposely ignored industrial workers, while mobilizing all other classes for action, in order to minimize the importance of this group, whose violent methods of struggle, under Communist leadership, were contrary to Congress principles.

It is also possible that Communists activity among the peasants gave an impetus to the Congress mass contacts program. In spite of efforts, especially marked during periods of civil disobedience to

enlist the support of the masses, little was done to enroll these groups as such into the Congress organization. The mass contacts program adopted at the Congress Session in 1936 may be considered an attempt to counteract Communist and Socialist influence.

The most recent instance in which Congress has followed a lead given by the Communist Party concerns attempts to establish unity with the Muslim League. Although it would be an exaggeration to state that Communist propaganda was responsible for Gandhi's efforts to solve the problem of Pakistan by recognizing the Muslim right to autonomy, it seems probable that the Communists did much to swing public opinion in this direction, and to win support for the concessions Gandhi was prepared to make.

3. Conflicts of Interests

Basic conflicts in ideology and method underlie relations between Congress and the Communists. Leaders of Congress, drawn for the most part from the bourgeoisie, and pledged to non-violence and class-cooperation, have regarded the Communists as a dangerous and disruptive element. Even those, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, who themselves hold strong socialist convictions, have had little patience with the Communist program of action; any movement which hindered or was likely to hinder unity in the ranks of the nationalists was condemned.

During the years in which Congress held office in the provinces, the various ministries differed somewhat in their treatment of the Communist problem. In the Legislative Assembly of Bombay, it was publicly admitted that the Trade Disputes Bill had for one of its objectives "to save the workers from the influence of the Communists."[1] The same government in reply to a question in the Assembly regarding the ban on the Communist Party, stated that "it did not think it advisable to recommend the lifting of the ban...and that it was not in the public interest to disclose the reasons for not making such a recommendation."[2] The Congress government in Madras also adopted an uncompromising attitude towards the Communist Party. On the other hand, the United Provinces Congress Government recommended that the Government of India lift the ban from all committees of the Communist Party. Furthermore when the Employers' Association of Northern India demanded a definite assurance from the Government that steps would be taken to check the spread of Communist propaganda among the workers, the United Provinces Government replied that no doctrine could be suppressed by coercive measure alone, and refused to take further action.

Events during the last few years appear to have widened the breach between the two groups. The Congress considered that Communists

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1 Servant of India, 10 November 1938, p. 555
2 Ibid., 9 March 1939, p. 123

have collaborated with the Government of India, while Congress carried on the struggle for freedom and independence. Provincial committees formed by Congressmen to put into effect the recently adopted constructive program have voted, almost without exception, to exclude Communists. In South India, Congressmen have charged that the Communists are "votaries of violence and that they opposed and betrayed the August resolution." A manifesto issued by the Congressmen stated: "...members of the Communist Party...have questioned the leadership of Mahatmaji and his basic principles like truth and non-violence,...have no scruples to adopt any policy and programme to attain their end,...have created a tradition itself in vulgarizing the patriotic standpoints of the Congress."[1]

It is also evident that the Congress fears that it has lost ground while the Communists have made progress. The new constructive program which concentrates on village uplift and labor organization, is designed to gain adherents among the peasantry and the working class. According to reports 10 labor unions have already been formed in Bombay; stress is laid on the role of the workers in conducting union affairs, so that every union will have an executive "dominated by genuine representatives of the working class."[2] This is intended as a direct challenge to the Communist labor unions which are usually

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1 People's War, 17 December 1944
2 Hindu, 1 January 1945

dominated by professional organizers, party members, who are seldom laborers. P.S. Sane, a Congress leader of Maharashtra, in December 1944 went on a 20-day hunger strike as a "penance over the sorry state of affairs in the labour movement", which is dominated by the Communists.[1]

Gandhi has so far refused to commit himself to any policy regarding Communist membership in the Congress. It was reported in February 1945 that he was collecting information regarding complaints and allegations against the Communists, and that he has not as yet any definite proof against them.[2]

D. The Communist Party and the Muslim League

1. Relations in General

Until recently the Communists have made little headway within the Muslim League, and there have been few Communist members of the organization. The most prominent Muslims in the Communist Party are members of Congress rather than of the Muslim League. During the last few years, however, Communists, especially in the Punjab, have entered the League in considerable numbers and have succeeded to a certain extent in making an impress on League policy in this province. According to reports, recent Communist recruits in the League occupy prominent positions in the Punjab Provincial League Committee. Daniyal Latifi, a Punjab Communist, after joining the League was made office secretary of the Provincial Committee as well as office

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22 December 1944
2. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 February 1945

secretary of the League Assembly Party.[1] The fact that the Unionist Party, which the Communists, together with the Congress and the League, condemn as reactionary, is in power in the Punjab, enables the Communists to work with the League on provincial issues. During the struggle for mastery which took place in 1944 between Jinnah and Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, Unionist Premier of the Punjab, the Communist Party upheld Jinnah. In Bengal however, where a League Ministry is in power, the Communists are more critical of League policies, and there are very few Communists who are members of the Bengal branch of the League.

The Muslim League, dominated largely by wealthy landowners, has been very cautious in accepting Communist overtures. Jinnah, addressing a conference of the Punjab Muslim Students' Federation, referred scornfully to Communist propaganda. Even though in the past Communism had won some converts among Muslims, he said, "the Mussalman of the last 5 or 7 or 10 years had changed and the Communists will not now succeed in folling us...we do not want any flag excepting the League flag of Crescent and Star. Islam is our guide and a complete code for our life."[2] Early in February 1945, a member of the Punjab Muslim League gave notice of his intention to submit to the All-India League Council a resolution which would make Communists and Congress Muslims who join the League ineligible to hold any League office.[3]

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1 Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15 February 1945
2 The Tribune, 21 March 1944
3 Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15 February 1945

On the other hand, Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the League and leader of the League party in the Central Legislative Assembly, paid tribute to the Communist Party for its "ceaseless efforts to convince the Hindu masses of the justice of the demand for the right of self-determination for Muslims."[1]

The Muslim League Planning Committee has recently advocated the development of a "collective economy" with "nationalization of all basic means of Production, Distribution and Comminication." The Committee's preliminary report is the Muslim League's answor to the Bombay Plan drawn up by Hindu industrialists. It is also undoubtedly designed to compete with the report of the National Planning Committee appointed by the Congress. To what an extent it can be considered an attempt to win over the more progressive elements in the Muslim population and to counter-act Communist influence is a matter for conjecture.

2. The Question of Pakistan

Indian Communist policy with regard to minority problems is based on Soviet theory and practice. In dealing with the problem of Pakistan, the Communists consider that the Muslims form a homogeneous group and a single nationality, and as such are entitled to the right of self-determination. "The realization of the right of national minorities to self-determination including separation" was made one of the "main objects for the present stage of the Indian revolution"

1 Star of India, 11 June 1944

in the Draft Program of Action issued by the Communist Party of India in 1930.[1] The present demand of the Muslim League is regarded as the inevitable result of conditions and events in Indian political development. To this effect a statement made by Stalin in 1912 is quoted; "In the case of India too, it will probably be found that innumerable nationalities, till then lying dormant, would come to life with the further course of bourgeois development." [2]

The resolution on Pakistan and National Unity adopted by the enlarged plenum of the central committee 19 September 1942, gives a clear exposition of Communist policy on the minority question;"... the national government must recognize the following rights as part of its programme for national unity.

"(a) Every section of the Indian people which has a contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make-up and common economic life would be recognized as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state within the free Indian Union or federation and will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are the homelands of such nationalities and which

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1. International Press Correspondence, Vol. 10, no. 58, 18 December 1930
2. Quoted by G.M. Adhikari, Pakistan and Indian National Unity. London 1943, p.20

today are split up by the artificial boundaries of the present British provinces and the so-called "Indian States" would be re-united and restored to them in Free India. Thus free India of tomorrow would be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities, such as the Pathans, Western Punjabis (dominantly Muslims), Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindustanis, Rajasthanis, Gujerathis, Bengalis, Assamese, Beharies, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Karnatikis, Maharashtrians, Keralas, etc.

"Such a declaration of rights inasmuch as it concedes to every nationality, as defined above, and therefore to nationalities having Muslim faith, the right of autonomous State existence and of secession, can form the basis for unity between the National Congress and the League. For this would give to the Muslims wherever they are in an overwhelming majority in a contiguous territory which is their homeland, the right to form their autonomous States and even to separate if they so desire. In the case of the Bengali Muslims of the Eastern and Northern Districts of Bengal where they form the overwhelming majority, they may form themselves into an autonomous region as the State of Bengal or may form a separate State. Such a declaration therefore concedes the just essence of the Pakistan demand and has nothing in common with the separatist theory of dividing India into two nations on the basis of religions. [Italics supplied]

" But the recognition of the right of separation in this form need not necessarily lead to actual separation. On the other hand, by dispelling mutual suspicions, it brings about unity of action today and lays the basis for a greater unity in the free India of to-morrow. National unity forged on the basis of such a declaration and strengthened in the course of joint struggle in the defence of our motherland is bound to convince the peoples of all Indian nationalities of the free Indian union or federation that will emerge after the war of liberation is won, for the common defence of freedom, and democracy achieved and to build on that secure basis a greater and grander unity of India than our country has ever seen."[1]

G. M. Adhikari in proposing this resolution further clarified the Communist position on certain crucial points. He admits that minorities have some ground for their fears of oppression by the majority under a national government; "The dominant national oppression is, of course, the imperialist oppresion. But inside the national movement itself, because of the unequal development of the various nationalities, certain sections are more developed and more powerful, certain others less developed and weaker. This factor breeds mutual distrust and suspicion inside the national movement.... The uneven bourgeois development itself creates conditions wherein one dominant nationality may be in a position to stifle the growth

1 Ibid., pp. 30-32

of less developed and weaker nationalities in a free India. We saw tiny germs of this even during the period of the Congress Ministries. That is why we say that such a fear is quite an understandable fear."[1]

It is therefore necessary, by granting nationalities the right of self-determination, to "direct a sharp edge against those who use the existing inequalities to rally the masses under the banner of Pakistan, to pander to reactionary Pan-Islamic sentiment under the cover of old religious prejudices, to turn the masses away from the common freedom movement."[2]

How far removed was the Communist position from that of Jinnah and the Muslim League may be demonstrated by another quotation from the same source. "The 'appeasement' theory --- 'Give Jinnah what he wants' ---this theory is essentially a bourgeois reformist theory... This approach does not think in terms of developing a dynamic unity of the Hindu and the Muslim masses, does not think of unity as a developing people's movement. It is this theory which leads, as in the case of Rajaji's experience, to the notion that unity cannot be achieved---naturally enough, a theory which depends for unity purely on the subjective goodwill of individual leaders cannot lead anywhere else except to defeatism and demoralization. Not "Give Jinnah what he wants', but create the basis for giving the Muslim masses their just demands and lay the basis thus for unbreakable unity between the Hindu and Muslim masses, unity to achieve national government, unity to defend our common land."[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 23
2 Ibid., p. 24
3 Ibid., p. 26

In summary, it may be said that the Communists accepted Stalin's definition of a national minority: " A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture" [1] that they recognized the existence of diverse nations in India, and their right to self-determination; that they interpreted agitation on the part of various groups for separation as evidence of a genuine, growing, democratic "national consciousness"; that, finally, grant of the right of self-determination including separation would lead, according to the Communist view, not to disruption and a divided India, but to a greater and stronger unity. The aim of Communist policy is, in Stalin's words, "to put an end to the policy of national oppression, to render it impossible, and thereby to remove the grounds of hostility between nations, to take the edge off that hostility and reduce it to a minimum." [2]

This interpretation of the Pakistan demand and this policy continued until August 1944. As late as March of that year B.T. Ranadive, a leading Communist, at a Pakistan Day meeting in Bombay "showed that the League demand was a demand for democracy and freedom, that fears of separation and weakness were unfounded, because

1. J. Stalin, On the National Question, London 1942, p.7. Extract taken from Marxism and the National Question, first published in 1913
2. Ibid., p. 13

the Soviet example was there before them and the workers and peasants were building the unity of all toilers." [1] The resolution on Pakistan adopted at the same meeting declared that "acceptance of the demand will bury all the differences among patriots and a firm unity of all patriots based on equality and democracy will be established for all time to come."[2]

However, events and perhaps a closer study of Mr. Jinnah's program apparently convinced the Communists that mere recognition of the right of self-determination would not meet the demand of the Muslim League, and that Pakistan, according to Jinnah's conception meant nothing short of total separation. On the eve of the Gandhi-Jinnah conversations on Pakistan, P. C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, wrote: "Acceptance of Pakistan, of course, implies a radical revision of our traditional concept of a united India. But India will thereby be stronger and not weaker. Independent, strong and contented Muslim States on our North-Western and North-Eastern borders will constitute the best defence of India. Whether it be through membership of the common union or through treaty relationship we cannot but have the best of neighborly relations with them." [3]

1. People's War, 26 March 1944
2. Ibid.
3. People's War, 20 August 1944

This new attitude necessitatied some revision of the definition of a nation. Joshi departs considerably from Stalin's criteria in defining a nation to suit the new situation; Muslim peoples, he says such as the Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans, Western Punjabis and Eastern Bengalis have the characteristics of a nation: " (1) They share the common aspiration to be free and autonomous in their homelands and to stick together in a common state. (2) They have the common bond of their own folk culture, strengthened by the traditional Muslim culture. (3) They have contiguous territory in the N. W. and N. E. zones of India except for the Eastern Bengalis who share a common homeland with their Hindu brothers."[1]

The explanation for this new approach undoubtedly lies in the increasing importance of the Pakistan issue in relations between India and Great Britain. Since the Cripps proposals officially accepted the principle of separation, the spokesmen of the Muslim League have become more vehement in their demands and more determined than ever to force the issue. British officials repeatedly have made agreement between the various parties in India on the future constitution the sine qua non of freedom and independence. The Communist position therefore is this: "It must be clearly recognized that the alternatives before India today are not what the average Congressman supposes: 'A United India or India disrupted through Mr. Jinnah's demand for Pakistan.' The real alternatives

1 Ibid., 3 October 1944

are a united India in the form of a brotherly alliance of Free Pakistan and Free Hindustan achieved through a joint front between the Congress and the League...or a permanent and double vivisection in which there will be neither free Pakistan or free Hindustan but the continuation of slavery and disunity in the worst form under the ...spell of British imperialist rule."[1] In other words, if the price of Indian independence is Pakistan, the Communists are prepared to pay it.

E. Communists and the Depressed Classes.

Until very recently Indian Communists have not paid particular attention to problems of the second largest minority, the Depressed Classes. A document entitled "Thesis on Indian Communism" issued in 1934, which laid down a general program for communist activity, stressed the need of informing the untouchables that "their emancipation cannot be achieved by their being taken inside the fold of Hinduism."[2]

In December 1944 People's War published an article by B.T. Ranadive, dealing with the Depressed Classes as a political minority, and the demands of the Scheduled Castes Federation which claims to represent these classes. The Federation has demanded separate settlements for untouchables; separate electorates in all legislatures and local bodies for representation of untouchables; and adequate

1. Ibid., 12 November 1944
2. CID #121739

provision for education among these classes. All of these demands are recognized by Ranadive as just and necessary for the economic, social and political advancement of the untouchables. At the same time Ambedkar, leader of this group, is criticized for shelving the issue of independence and taking a negative attitude towards the struggle for freedom: " The leaders of the Federation seem to be content with claiming their share in whatever the British may choose to concede." [1]. Untouchables are urged to join trade unions and peasant organizations "in order to work jointly with other workers and peasants for securing their day to day demands. The more solid their unity with other sections of workers and peasants in these class organizations, the quicker and more effective will be their pressure on other parties and sections of the people for supporting their special demands as Untouchables."[2]

In this case as with the Muslim League, the Communist concern is to build a United Front in order to achieve Indian freedom. The method combines concession of monority demands with efforts to mobilize members of the minority behind the Communist program.

F. Communism and the Indian Labor Movement.

1. Early Activities

The most important field of activity of the Indian Communists

1. People's War, 3 December 1944.
2. Ibid.

has been the labor movement. From the early days of the Party's formation to the present, the Communists have placed chief empahsis on the organization of labor. Opinions differ concerning the effect of the Communists on the labor movement. Moderates regard the radical and militant policy pursued by the Communists as chiefly responsible for the disunity and strife which characterized the Indian labor movement from 1930-1938, and attribute the backwardness of Indian labor to these internal disputes. Communists and sympathizers outside the party ranks claim that Communists have done more than any other group to organize laborers and develop political consciousness in the working class. It is a matter of fact that the largest and most prolonged strikes during the past two decades have been instigated and led by Communists. On the other hand it is said that working conditions in Ahmedabad, one of the largest textile centers in India, are superior to those in other areas, and that the workers have gained considerable benefits by arbitration without recourse to expensive strikes. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, which is under the guidance of Mr. Gandhi, its founder, has remained outside the all-India movement and has been taken as a model by those who distrust the Communist doctrine of class warfare.

Although as early as 1924 the Communists acquired influence in the labor movement the first important union organized and dominated by the Communists was the Girni Kangar (Mill Workers) Union

established in 1928. This occurred in the midst of a strike by Bombay mill workers against a standarization scheme which would have resulted in reduced wages, double work for each operative and large unemployment. A short time after the strike began a split occurred in the leadership, the left-wing under the Communists established the G.K.U, (Girni Kangar Union) and shortly absorbed most of the Textile workers in other unions. In January 1929 the union claimed a membership of 65,000 [1]. Under left-wing leadership the strike lasted for 6 months; the struggle spread to other industries and other parts of the country. Union membership increased tremendously. By the end of 1928 "there was hardly a single public utility service or industry which had not been affected, in whole or in part, by the wave of communism which swept the country during the year."[2] During the last quarter of 1928 the number of workers organized in trade unions in Bombay City increased from 84,000 to 160,000.[3]

2. The Communists and the Trade Unions

Thirty-one of the principal left-wing labor leaders were arrested in the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929, and the movement suffered a great set-back. Nevertheless the Communists emerged as an important faction at the All-India Trade Union Congress held at Nagpur in December of that year. Two years earlier at the 1927 session of the All-India

1. P. Schubin, "Problems of the Revolutionary movement in India." Communist International, May 1929, p. 513.
2. C.I.D. 121739
3. P. Schubin, op. cit., p. 513

Trade Union Congress the Communists had appeared as a distinct group and with their own program had tried, but without success, to capture the Congress. By 1929, however, the left-wing element had gained strength; a series of resolutions calling for boycott of the Royal Commission on Labour, appointed as a result of the Bombay strikes, and of the annual International Labor Conference at Geneva, for affiliation to the Third International at Moscow, and refusal to associate the All-India Trade Union Congress with the International Federation of Trade Unions, were passed by the Executive Committee. The right-wing section, led by N.M. Joshi, Chaman Lal, V.V. Giri and Shiva Rao withdrew from the Congress and formed a new organization under the name of the All-India Trade Union Federation.[1]

The Trade Union Congress, however, even as reconstituted, did not represent a united group. When the Congress met in Calcutta in 1931 under the presidency of Subhas Chandra Bose, the Communists, led by S.V. Deshpande and B.T. Ranadive seceded from the organization and formed the Red All-India Trade Union Congress. The group which remained favored a program dictated by M.N. Roy who, after his explusion from the Comintern in 1929 had returned to India and had succeeded in gaining a number of adherents.

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1 In April 1933 the federation amalgamated with the National Federation of Labour, a newly formed organization, and the joint body took the name National Trades Union Federation.

Roy differed from the orthodox Communists at this time chiefly in advocating cooperation with the National Congress: "The workers and the peasants are the arms and feet of the National Congress." [1] The Royists formed the National Reformist All-India Trade Union Congress with Mukunda Lal Sarkar, Jamnadas Mehta and G. H. Kandalkar as leaders. The President, Subhas Bose was in sympathy with this faction.

The Nationalist All-India Trade Unions Congress and the Communists formed a temporary alliance in 1933 for the purpose of fomenting strikes in Bombay, and in 1935 the two sections composed their differences. The Communist policy, then taking shape, of a united front against imperialism was probably responsible for this merger.

After various unsuccessful efforts to unite the All-India Trade Unions Congress and the National Trades Union Federation, in 1938 the two organizations finally agreed on a provisional amalgamation. At that time the National Trade Unions Federations had a membership of 83,000 in 62 unions, the All-Indian Trade Unions Congress 46,000 in 98 unions.[2] At a joint session held at Nagpur it was decided that representation of the Joint General Council would be on a 50-50 basis; that the All-Indian Trade Unions Congress would except the

1. Joan Beauchamp, British Imperialism in India, London 1934, p. 196
2. The Indian Year Book 1939-40, Bombay 1940, p. 575

constitution of the Federation; that there would be no affiliation with any foreign organization; and that political resolutions would not be carried without a three-fourths majority. The red flag was adopted but without the hammer and sickle. The relative strength of the two organizations is reflected in the election of officers. The chief positions went to members of the Federation. Dr. S. C. Bannerji was elected President; Mr. Aftab Ali and Mr. Jamnadas Mehta became Vice-Presidents; Mr. R. R. Bakhale became the Secretary, and Mr. S. V. Parulekar, Assistant Secretary. From the All-Indian Trade Unions Congress, Mr. Mukunda Lal Sarkar was elected Vice-President; Mr. R. S. Nimbkar, Treasurer; and Mr. B. K. Mukerji, Assistant Secretary.

The provisional amalgamation was ratified at Bomby in 1940. At this time however, another split took place over the issue of participation in the war effort. A resolution was adopted calling for neutrality but permitting affiliated unions to support the war effort if they so desired. Aftab Ali, head of the All-India Seamen's Federation withdrew from the All-India Trade Unions Congress and with Roy and his followers formed a new organization, the Trade Unions Federation. Since that time both organizations have claimed the right to represent Indian labor.

The Indian Communists, who were in a comparatively weak position when the All-Indian Trade Union Congress was reconstituted, have

have steadily gained strength. The All-Indian Trade Unions Congress at present claims a membership of 432,000 in 369 unions.[1] At the 1943 session the Communists, according to their own report, were in a majority. In the textile unions represented, they had a total strength of 50,000 out of 70,000; their unions were also the strongest and largest numerically in such industries as jute, railways, and mining. S. A. Dange, a prominent Communist, was elected President of the organization. On the General Council consisting of 72 members, 32 were members of the Communist Party; and 9 out of 21 members of the Working Committee were Communists.[2] However, while the Communists undoubtedly have great influence in the All-Indian Trade Unions Congress, they have not yet gained sufficient strength to dominate the organization. This was clearly seen at the 1943 meeting. A resolution demanding recognition of the principle of self-determination for minorities was proposed by a Bengal Communist. It received 69 percent of the votes but since a three-fourths majority is required to carry political resolutions, it was defeated.[3] Similarly the political resolution passed at the 1945 All-Indian Trade Unions Congress meeting was clearly a compromise between the Communists and other members. It "pledged the whole-hearted support of the working-class ...in the efforts made by political leaders like

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1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 7 February 1945
2. People's War, 16 May 1945
3. Ibid.

Mahatama Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah not only for resolving differences but also securing the transfer of power."[1]

Until recently the Communists have had very little influence in the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (A.I.R.F.) which has remained more or less apart from other all India trade union organizations since its foundation in 1922,. Although Communists for some time have dominated several important railway unions, notably the Great Indian Peninsular and South Indian Railway Unions, until December 1944 the control of the All-India Railway Federation was largely in the hands of right-wing labor leaders headed by Jamnadas Mehta. In the 1945 elections to offices of the Federation a Communist, Kalyanasundaram of the S.I.R. was made one of the vice-presidents. While the new president, V.V. Giri is not a Communist, it is considered likely that he will accept their support.

G. Communists and the Indian Peasant Movement.

In spite of the early formation of Workers' and Peasants' Parties, and the interest of the Communist Party in peasant problems, the Indian peasant movement actually developed more or less independently of the Communists. The Workers' and Peasants' Parties, which never had much contact with the villagers, and which were condemned by the Comintern as based on a two-class principle, collapsed after the arrest of the principle leaders in connection with the Meerut Cons-

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22 January 1945

piracy Case, and no attempts were made to revive them. At the end of 1934, after the imposition of the ban on the Communist Party, the Provisional Central Committee of the Party laid down as one of the main tasks for the immediate future, the formation of peasant committees in rural areas, but by this time the Congress Socialist Party had been formed and except in a few provinces, notably Bengal where the Communists had considerable influence among the peasants, the Congress Socialist Party in the following years succeeded largely in gaining control of the peasant movement.

Prior to 1936 the separate provincial peasant organizations grew up under the auspices of various groups and individuals without any centralization. In the United Provinces the peasant movement was chiefly under the leadership of Congressmen and no separate peasant organization was developed until 1935. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in Bihar, organized the peasants around 1934 and retained control of the movement. The Socialist peasant associations of the Punjab, organized by Communists, suffered from government repression to such an extent that they never became very strong. Rival groups sponsored by Sir Chhotu Ram and attached to the Unionist Party never functioned independently. In Madras Professor N.G. Ranga had organized peasant associations as early as 1923; later the Justice Party tried to use the associations for its own purposes, but Ranga was able to re-establish his influence. The peasant party of Bengal was founded

in 1928 by Fazlul Huq for the purpose of building up a political following among Muslim peasants. A group of Bengal Communists, however, succeeded in capturing several branches of the organization and some positions of leadership; under their influence the party swung to the left and adopted a more radical program.

In 1935 Jai Prakash Narain and others of the Congress Socialist Party took the lead in preparing for the formation of an all-India peasant organization, and in 1936 representatives of the provincial organizations met to hold the first All-India Kisan (Peasant) Congress. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati presided, and he, Ranga and Mohanlal Gautam were elected secretaries. The main resolution stated that "The Kisan movement stands for the achievement of ultimate economic and political power for the producing masses through its active participation in the national struggle for winning complete independence."[1] A charter of fundamental and minimum demands framed at the same time called for abolition of the landlord system, cancellation of arrears of debt, and provision of land to landless peasants and those having less than 5 acres to be cultivated on a cooperative basis. For the immediate future the peasants demanded a series of ameliorative measures which included rent reduction, abolition of feudal dues and forced labor, 5 years moratorium on all agrarian indebtedness, development of irrigation and credit facilities, etc. The Red Flag was adopted as the official emblem of the organization.

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1 N.G. Ranga, The Kisan Handbook, Madras 1938, p. 1

An organizational committee appointed in 1936 reflected the power of the Congress Socialist Party in the All-India Kisan Sabha; ten of the eleven members were prominent Congress Socialists and included K.M. Ashraf, Harshadeo Malaviya, Acharya Narendra Deo, Sajjad Zaheer and E.M.S. Namboodripad. Bankin Mukherjee, representing Bengal, was the only Communist.

It will be seen that the objectives of the All-India Kisan Sabba did not differ materially from those set forth by the Communists. In general the attitudes of the Socialist peasant leaders towards the Communists were friendly. In 1938 they proclaimed an All-India Day to demand legalization of the Communist Party. Nevertheless the Communists had practically no control over the organization except in Bengal. In this Province, where the Congress Socialist Party was not strong, Bankim Mukherjee, Muzaffar Ahmed and Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar, all prominent communists, played the leading roles in the local peasant organization.

The policies of the All-India Kisan Sabba were very far to the left of the National Congress and in several provinces, while the Congress held office, conflicts between the ministries and the peasants occurred. In spite of the fact that the Congress Socialist Party remained within the Congress organization, the breach between the Congress and the All-India Kisan Sabba which appeared as early as 1937 widened during the following two years. In 1939 the Congress

declared that "Kisans...have a right to organize Kisan Sabhas but the Congress cannot associate itself with such of its activities as are incompatible with its basic principles and tend to create a hostile and suspicious atmosphere against its policy." [1]

Between 1942 and 1944 the Communist Party gained almost complete control of the peasant organization. On the General Council of the All-India Kisan Sabba in December 1944, 22 of the 25 members were Communists. [2] This situation is probably the result of several developments. The Congress Socialist Party after the August 1942, meeting of the All-India Congress Committee adopted a militant program of sabotage and civil disobedience, and the principal leaders were jailed. A large number of the more leftist members of the Party, who disapproved of this policy, joined the Communists. Among these were many who had taken an active role in peasant organizations, such as Sajjad Zaheer, K. M. Ashraf, E.M.S. Namboodripad and Harshadeo Malaviaya. Other peasant leaders, such as Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, although they have not joined the Communist Party, have collaborated with the Communists in work among the peasants. It is possible that experiences of "Congress Raj" during the years of provincial autonomy, convinced some of the peasant leaders that a more radical approach was necessary if the peasants were ever to obtain their demands.

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1. Indian National Congress. Report of the General Secretary, March 1938 - February 1939, p. 8
2. Eastern Times, 6 December 1944

Whether or not the Communists will prove able to retain their control over the peasant movement remains to be seen.[1] N. G. Ranga Member of the Central Legislative Assembly, one of the most influential of the peasant leaders in the pre-Communist period, refused to cooperate with the Communists, and has recently declared his intention of forming Kisan Councils in competition with the older organizations. A report of his recent conversations with Gandhi indicates his views on the political role of the peasant: Ranga asked Gandhi if, by saying that the "earth rightly belongs or should belong to the peasant" He meant that "the peasant ought to gain control over the land he cultivates or that he should also gain effective voice and power in the society and over the state in which he is obliged to live? If the Kisans are to have only land and not effective political power, their position will be just as bad as in Soviet Russia where the political power has been monopolized by the proletariat dictatorship." Gandhi replied: "I have no doubt that if we have democratic swaraj as it must be if freedom is won through non-violence, the Kisan must hold power in all its phases including political power." Ranga then asked if he was right in "interpreting your statement that 'land should not belong to the absentee landlord or zemindar', that ultimately the Zemindari system has to be abolished?" Gandhi replied, "Yes. But you should remember that I visualize a system of trusteeship regulated by the state. In other words I do not

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1. There are already indications that their domination will lead to destiny in the all-India movement.

want to antagonize the Zemindars and for that matter any class without cause." [1] Following this conversation Ranga called upon peasants to stand behind the National Congress; he declared that only such peasants as are willing to pledge their loyalty to the Congress will be admitted to membership in the new peasant organization. "Now that the National Congress has come to stand for the realization of the democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja-Raj...every member of the Kisan Congress shall also be a member of the National Congress.[2]

The Communists have opposed plans to form rival organizations. The activities of Ranga as well as the Congress Constructive Program with its emphasis on village welfare work may prove a serious threat to their present supremscy in the field. As a means of allaying fear that the Kisan Sabha is dominated by the Communists, the Central Committee in its December 1944 meeting, decided that in future resolutions on political issues would require a three-fourths majority. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, then President of the A.I.K.S., in explaining this resolution, said: This provision for a substantial majority on political issues was necessary... in order to assure the 'newcomers' that their political interests would not suffer. There might be apprehension among the 'newcomers' that they would have to be un-

1. The Leader, 8 December 1944
2. The Hindu, 9 December 1944

der the discipline of the Kisan Sabha which may be dominated by a particular political party...While it might be that a particular political party was now dominating the Kisan Sabha...the 'newcomers' would have absolute freedom to preach their own political ideas."[1]

A recent fissure within the ranks of the All-India Kisan Sabha has produced further disunity in the peasant movement. Swami Sahajanand during his presidency in 1944 suspended the general secretary and the central office of the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha on the ground that, contrary to the neutrality of the All-India Kisan Sabha on the issue of Indian unity, they had carried on propaganda in favor of Pakistan. This action was declared unconstitutional by the Central Committee of the All-India Kisan Sabha, Swami Sahajanand resigned his office and refused to attend the All-India Kisan Conference held in Bengal, April 1945. Since he controls the Bihar provincial peasant organization, one of the largest in India, the All-India Kisan Sabha is considerably weakened by these developments. It appears probable that he and Ranga will combine to form a new organization closely connected with the National Congress.

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1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 5 December 1944

Appendix 1. WHO'S WHO IN THE INDIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Dr. G. M. Adhikari

Studied at Berlin University where he received Doctorate of Science. In Europe was in touch with M.N. Roy and other Communists. Returned to India in 1928; worked with Phillip Spratt in Bombay. Arrested and imprisoned in connection with Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929. Released at end of 1933. Set to work to reorganize Party; helped to organize strike of Bombay Textile workers in 1934; arrested in April of that year. Upon his release was exiled to a small town in Southern Bombay. Undertook formation of underground organization when Party was declared illegal. One of most prominent and able party leaders at present time. Editor of People's War since July 1943. Author of numerous pamphlets dealing with Party program and policies.

Muzaffar Ahmed

Bengal Communist. One of the founders of the Party. Accused in Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924. On his release took an active part in organizing Workers' and Peasants' Parties; became general secretary of the Bengal W. and P. Party; edited its paper Ganavani. Imprisoned in Meerut Conspiracy Case. Active in Kisan Sabha organization in Bengal. Member of the Bengal Provincial Committee of the Communist Party in 1943.

Dr. Z. A. Ahmed

Active in peasant movement in United Provinces. Prominent Congress Socialist; member of All-India Congress Committee in 1939; Joined Communist Party around 1940. Has taken an active part in promoting Congress-League unity.

Dr. K. M. Ashraf

Formerly a Congress Socialist; member of the All-India Congress Committee in 1939. Studied at London University where he received Doctorate. Was placed in Charge of Political and Economic Information Department of the National Congress in 1937. Was one of the group

of Congress Socialists who joined the Communist Party after the war.

S. S. Batliwala

Formerly a prominent Congressman of Bombay; took part in civil disobedience movement of 1930-32. Joined Congress Socialist Party in 1934. Achieved notoriety in 1937 when he was arrested in Madras, while Congress Ministry was in office, for advocating an economic revolution through the agency of the Congress. Later joined Communist Party. Author of several pamphlets.

Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna

Punjab Communist. Went to US over 30 years ago where he helped to organize the Ghadr Party. Worked with Hardayal and Barakatullah. Returned to India to carry out the Party's program. Implicated in Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1914; given transportation for life. Went on hunger strikes in various jails. On his release in 1930 he became a Communist. Organized Kisan Sabhas. Became President of All-India Kisan Sabha in 1940. Jailed in the same year under Defense of India rules. Released in 1943.

R. D. Bharadwaj.

Leader of United Provinces Communists. Has had some experience in labor organization; in 1934 was jailed for organizing strike in railway workshops in Ajmer. Was at one time member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Member of the All-India Congress Committee in 1939 and leader of Communist group in that body.

Sardar Chandroth

Malabar Communist. Born of peasant family; joined army and went to Mesopotamia in World War. After demobilization joined Malabar Special Police, a semi-military body formed to quell Moplah Rebellion of 1921. Execution of the terrorist, Bhagat Singh, in 1931 caused him to break ties with the government. He became a Congress-

man and participated in 1930-32 civil disobedience movement; was sent to jail. On his release became one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala. Was converted to Communism by Ghate and Sundarayya. Joined the Party around 1940.

Shripat Amrit Dange.

One of the founders of the Communist Party. Foremost Communist Labor Leader. First came into prominence in connection with Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924. At that time Dange was a young man under 30; editor of the Socialist a weekly devoted to propagation of Marxism; author of several books and pamphlets, among them Gandhi vs. Lenin. Was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment. On his release worked to organize labor in Bombay. Became General Secretary of Girni Kamgar Union in Bombay and Assistant Secretary of AITUC. Accused and sentenced in Meerut Conspriracy Case of 1929. Remained in jail until the end of 1935. Member of Presidium of the first congress of the Communist Party in 1943. Same year was elected President of AITUC in which capacity he represented India Labor at the World T.U.C. in 1945.

S.V. Ghate

One of the founder-members of the Communist Party; helped to organize the Party after arrest of Dange, Muzaffar etc. in Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. Was elected first Secretary of the Party. One of the leaders of the trade union movement during years 1926-29. Was delegate from Bombay to All-India Congress Committee in 1927; in the same year was elected assistant Secretary of AITUC. Was Vice-President of the Bombay Municipal Workers' Union at the time of his arrest in the Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929. On his release was sent to Madras to organize left-wing labor and Communist Party in South India. Was one of the first Communists to be arrested in 1940 and was not released until May 1944. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Dharani Goswami

Bengal Communist. Formerly a member of the Anushilan Society, a terrorist organization in Bengal. Joined Communist Party in 1926 and was instrumental in converting ex-terrorists to Communism. Active in Youth organizations; one of the founders of the Young Comrades League about 1927-28. Was delegate to All-India Congress Committee in 1927. Arrested in Meerut Conspiracy Case, at which time he was cited as organizer of Bengal Jute Workers Union.

Mohammed Ismail

Active in trade union movement in Calcutta; known chiefly for his work among tramway workers. Elected a member of the Calcutta Corporation in March 1944; and in the same year, a member of the General Council of the AITUC.

Puran Chand Joshi

Born in 1907, son of a school master in Almora, United Provinces. While still a student at Allahabad University, Joshi became a party worker. Served as Secretary of the United Provinces Workers' and Peasants' Party; edited the party's paper, Kranti Kari. When he was arrested in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy Case he was described as "extremely enthusiastic" and therefore "one of the most dangerous" of the conspirators. With the legalization of the Party in 1942 Joshi emerged as one of the most prominent of the Communist leaders. Became General Secretary of the Communist Party. From July 1942-July 1943 edited Peoples' War. Author of numerous pamphlets. Considered ablest organizer of the Party.

Sardar Sohan Singh Josh

Communist member of the Punjab Assembly and chief whip of the Congress Assembly Party. Has had long experience in peasant work in the Punjab. Presided over first All-India Workers' and Peasants' Parties Conference in 1928. Arrested and imprisoned in Meerut Conspiracy Case. Member of the All-India Congress Committee in 1939.

Somnath Lahiri

Graduate of Calcutta University. Sentenced in 1936 to 2 years rigorous imprisonment for being member of the Communist Party. Became member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1943. Elected member of Calcutta Corporation in 1944. Like Ismail, he is active in trade union movement in Calcutta. Elected member of the General Council of the AITUC in 1943.

S.S. Mirajkar

Prominent labor leader of Bombay. Was secretary of B.I. Steam Navigation Co. Staff Union at time of his arrest in Meerut Conspiracy Case. Assistant Secretary of AITUC in 1943; President, Bombay Provincial TUC in 1944. Connected with Girni Kamgar Union in Bombay. Member of Bombay Corporation.

Maqdoom Mohiuddin

Communist of Hyderabad State. Was formerly a professor in the City College at Hyderabad. Organized railway workers. Vice-President, Nizam's State Railwaymen's Union.

Bankim Mukherji

Communist member of Bengal Legislative Assembly. Active in peasant and labor organization for many years. President of All India Kisan Sabha in 1943; Pres. Bengal Railway Workers' Union in 1943; member of General Council of the AITUC in 1943 and 1945.

E.M. Sankaran Namboodripad

Member of one of leading Brahmin landlord families of Malabar. Organized and led social reform movement among youths of this class. Took part in civil disobedience movement of 1930-32; later joined Congress Socialist Party. Twice held post of secretary in Provincial (Kerala) Congress Committee. Elected member of Madras Legislative Assembly on Congress ticket in 1937. Member of all India Congress Committee in 1939. Joined Communists in 1940 and was instrumental in leading Congress Socialist Party members into the Communist fold. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Has made large contributions to Party funds.

S.G. Patkar

Bombay Communist. Joined party when a youth during the general strike of 1928. Has sine been connected with Girni Kamgar Union in Bombay. Member of the All India Congress Committee in 1939.

Krishna Pillai

Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party in Kerala; one of the vice-presidents of the Kerala Regional Committee of the AITUC.

P. Ramamurthi

Editor of Janasakti, Communist paper of Madras. Elected member of the General Council of the AITUC in 1943. Member of the Government of Madras Post-war Reconstruction Committee.

B.T. Ranadive

Bombay Communist Labor leader; connected with Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Author of numerous pamphlets; frequent contributor to People's War.

Pandit Rahul Sankrityayana

Communist leader and oriental scholar. Traveled extensively in Tibet and Southern China. Discovered various rare literary items and made collections of paintings. Professor of Sanskrit and Pali in Ceylon 1926-28. Has taken part in political activities since 1920. Member of the Communist Party since 1939. President of the All-India Kisan Sabha in 1940. In 1944 went by invitation to Leningrad as Professor of Oriental Learning in Leningrad Academy of Sciences.

S.G. Sardesai

Member of the All-India Congress Committee in 1939. On the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Author of numerous pamphlets; contributes frequently to People's War.

Ranen Sen

Bengal Communist. Member of the Bengal Provincial Committee of the Communist Party; member of the Central Committee of the Party. Elected member of the General Council of the AITUC in 1943, 1945.

K.P. Shankarlingam

Madras Communist. After passing matriculation examination in 1926, took a position on G.I.P. Railway as fitter-apprentice. Took a part in civil disobedience movement of 1930-32, and was arrested several times. President of G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union at the present time.

Vajubhai Shukla

Communist leader of Kathiawar. Took part in 1921 non-cooperation movement. Afterwards, with some others founded and conducted the National School at Rajkot. Arrested in civil disobedience movement of 1930. In jail became a Socialist. Built up a leftist movement in Kathiawar; took a leading part in 1938 people's movement in Rajkot. Jailed in 1940 for 2 years.

Buja Singh

Went to Argentine as a laborer "many years ago." Joined Argentine branch of the Ghadr Party. Was sent to Moscow for training. Returned to India and worked to organize laborers and peasants.

Gurumukh Singh

Punjab Communist. In 1914 went with Prithvi Singh and Sohan Singh Bkakhna to India from California. Arrested and sentenced to death in 1915 (Lahore Conspiracy Case?) but sentence was later transmuted to transportation for life. Was in the Andaman Islands until 1922. While being transferred to India he and some Ghadr comrades escaped and went to Russia where he became a Communist. In 1932 he attempted to return to India but was arrested by Afghan Government; was allowed to return to Russia. Managed to find his way to India and worked underground until his arrest in 1936. Was still in jail in 1943.

P.S. Sundarayya

Andhra Communist. Joined the National Congress as a young boy and took part in 1930 civil disobedience movement. Was arrested and while in jail became converted to Communism. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Sardar Teja Singh Swantar

One of the most prominent of the group of Ghadr Party members who became Communists. During the 1920's and early 1930's was connected with Ghadr activities in various parts of the world. About 1925 was sent to Constantinople for military training; but was expelled after one year on ground that he was not a Turkish citizen. Was in US about 1931 but was ordered to leave by U S authorities. Set out on a tour of Sikh colonies in Panama, Brazil and Argentine. Collected money to send students to Moscow. On his return to India sometime later he engaged in peasant organization. Was elected member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1937. Elected President Maharastra Kisan Conference in 1945.

N.L. Upadhyaya

One of the most prominent Communists in Karnatak.

D.S. Vaidya

Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Communist Committee. Member of the Presidium of the Party's first all India conference. Railway worker.

Sajjad Zaheer

Congress Socialist, who joined the Communist Party after the war. Was Secretary of the National Congress Committee for Aid to Spain, in 1937. Was active in U.P. peasant movement. A Member of the All India Congress Committee in 1939. A member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1944. Contributes articles to People's War dealing with Muslim problems. Author of several pamphlets.

APPENDIX II Excerpts from the "Draft Program of Action of the C.P.[1] of India." Issued in 1930.[2]

Part I. Main Tasks of the Indian Revolution.

"The supremacy of British imperialism is the basis of the backwardness, poverty, and endless suffering of our people".

"In order to destroy the slavery of the Indian people and emancipate, the working class and the peasants from the poverty which is crushing them down, it is essential to win the independence of the country and to raise the banner of agrarian revolution, which would smash the system of landlordism surviving from the middle ages and would cleanse the whole of the land from all this medieval rubbish. An agrarian revolution, against British capitalism and landlordism must be the basis for the revolutionary emancipation of India."

"The greatest threat to the victory of the Indian revolution is the fact that great masses of our people still harbour illusions about the National Congress, and have not yet realised that it represents a class organization of the capitalists working against the fundamental interests of the toiling masses of our country."

"...world history and the lessons of the class struggle in India prove that only the leadership of the working class can ensure the fulfilment of the historic task of emancipating the Indian people, abolishing national slavery, sweeping aside all the fetters which check national development, confiscating the land and effedting far-reaching democratic reconstruction of a revolutionary character."

"The only form of government which can safeguard the interests of the workers, peasants and toilers generally is the Soviets. The Soviets, set up in the course of the revolutionary revolt of the working masses, as insurrectionary bodies for the overthrow of British supremacy, will be the sole genuine seats of authority, elected directly in the factories, works, villages, etc., ensuring confiscation of the land and the satisfaction of the vital needs of the mass of the people. The Soviet Government alone will be capable of ensuring to national minorities their right to self-determination, including that of complete separation, and at same time achieving the maximum unity in the ranks of the toilers of various nationalities, engaged in common revolutionary struggle against the enemies of the ...

1. Note: C.P. stands for Communist Party. It is so abbreviated in the source from which all these quotations are taken.
2. International Press Correspondence, vol. 10, no. 58, 18 December 1930

Indian revolution...Only such a government will be able to make an alliance with all other Soviet States against international imperialism and for the final victory of the world revolution."

"...the C.P. of India advances the following main objects for the present stage of the Indian revolution.

1. The complet independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule. The cancellation of all debts. The confiscation and nationalization of all British factories, banks, railways, sea and river transport and plantations.

2. Establishment of a Soviet Government. The realization of the right of national minorities to self-determination including separation. Abolition of the native states, the creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.

3. The confiscation without compensation of all the lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British Government, officials and moneylenders, and handing over for use to the toiling peasantry. Cancellation of slave agreements and all the indebtedness of the peasantry to moneylenders and banks.

4. The 8-hour working day and the radical improvement of conditions of labour. Increase in wages and State maintenance for the unemployed.

Part II. The Fight for Partial Demands of the Revolutionary Movement.

"The C.P. of India considers that the sole and historically tested means of winning independence, carrying out the agrarian revolution and achieving democratic reconstruction is the path of the revolutionary struggle of the widest possible mass of the people, developing into a general national armed insurrection against the British exploiters and all their allies in our country."

A. General Demands

1. Expulsion of the British troops, abolition of the police and general armament of the toilers.

2. Immediate liberation of all political prisoners, including those who have committed acts of individual and mass violence.

3. Unlimited freedom of speech, conscience, press, meeting, strikes and associations for the toilers and abolition of all anti-popular and anti-labour laws....

4. The abolition of rank, caste, national and communal privileges, and the full equality of all citizens irrespective of sex, religion and race.

5. Complete separation of religion from the State, and the expulsion of the missionaries as direct agents of the imperialists with confiscation of their property."

B. Special Workers' Demands

1. "The C.P. of India calls upon all its supporters and all class-conscious workers to help in organizing factory committees in all factories, railways, docks, etc. throughout the country. In cases where, owing to the victimization of the employers or British authorities the factory committees have to work semi-legally, the C.P. advocates putting forward the demand for recognition of the factory committees as one of the principal demands in strike movements....

"With the object of protecting the working class from physical and moral degeneration, and also in order to raise its capacity to fight for emancipation, the C.P. of India fights for;

"1. Limitation of the working day to 8-hours for adults and 6-hours for youths from 1 to 20. Introduction of the 6-hour working day in all harmful industries, including coal mining, and free supply of milk and butter to the workers in these industries.

"2. Complete freedom of trade unions, demonstrations, picketing and strikes.

"3. Equal pay for equal work for women, youths and men.

"4. Complete abolition of compulsory contract labor and systems of legal bondage of the workers.

"5. A compulsory weekly rest period at full pay, and a paid annual holiday of 4 weeks for adults and 6 weeks for youths.

"6. State insurance against unemployment, sickness, accidents, industrial diseases, old age, loss of working capacity, orphange and compensation for disablement.

"7. Establishment of a State minimum wage of 50 rupees a month, prohibition of the contract system and establishment by law of a weekly payment of wages.

"8. Prohibition of deductions from wages for any reason or purpose whatsoever (fines, bad work, etc.)

"9. Introduction of properly organized factory inspection, workers elected members thereof, to supervise labour conditions in all factories employing hired labour.

"10. The abolition of the system of hiring workers through jobbers, sarangs etc., employment and dismissal of workers to take place through labour exchanges, controlled and supervised by the trade unions, The abolition of all caste and feudal customs and regulations within the factories."

"The C.P. of India is definitely against the principle of arbitration and interference by capitalist arbitration courts. It emphasises most definitely that the sole means for winning any serious concessions on the part of the exploiters is resolute class struggle by strikes and mass revolutionary activities."

C. Peasant Demands

"I. The C.P. of India fights for the confiscation without compensation of all lands and estates, forests and pastures of the native princes, landlords, moneylenders and the British Government, and the transference to peasant committees for use by the toiling masses of the peasantry. The C.P. of India fights for the complete wiping out of the medieval system of landholding...

"II. The C.P. of India fights for the immediate confiscation of all plantations and their transference to revolutionary committees elected by the plantation workers. The allotments to which the planters assign their contract workers and also the land not in cultivation, to be handed over to the labourers and poor peasants as their property. At the same time the C.P. of India is in favour of nationalization of large-scale mechanically equipped plantations, and workshops connected therewith, for utilization in the interests of the whole Indian people.

"III. The C.P. of India fights for the immediate nationalization of the whole system of irrigation, complete cancellation of all indebtedness and taxes, and the transference of the control and supervision of the work of irrigation to revolutionary peasant committees elected by the working peasantry.

"IV. In order to disorganize British rule and maintain revolutionary pressure against it, the C.P. of India calls upon the peasantry and agricultural proletariat to engage in all kinds of political demonstrations, and collective refusal to pay taxes and dues, or to carry out the orders and decisions of the government and its agents.

"V. The C.P. of India calls for refusal to pay rent, irrigation charges or other exactions, and refusal to carry out any labour services whatsoever... for the landlords, native princes and their agents.

"VI. The C.P. of India calls for refusal to pay debts and arrears to government, the landlords and the moneylenders in any form whatsoever.

"VII. As a practical watchword for the campaign among the peasantry, and as a means of developing more political consciousness in the peasant movement, the C.P. of India calls for the immediate organization of revolutionary peasant committees in order to carry on a fight to achieve all the revolutionary democratic changes required in the interests of emancipating the peasantry from the yoke of British imperialism and its feudal allies.

"VIII. The C.P. of India calls for the independent organization of the agricultural proletariat, particularly the plantation workers, and its amalgamation with the proletariat of the towns under the banner of the Communist Party, as well as its representation in the peasant committees."

D. Emancipation of the Pariahs and the Slaves

"As a result of the rule of British imperialism in our country, there are still in existence millions of slaves and tens of millions of socially outcast working pariahs, who are deprived of all rights. British rule, the system of landlordism, the reactionary caste system, religious deception and all the slave and serf traditions of the past throttle the Indian people and stand in the way of its emancipation. They have led to the result that in India, in the 20th century, there are still pariahs who have no right to meet with all their fellow men, drink from common wells, study in common schools etc.

"Only the ruthless abolition of the caste system in its reformed, Gandhi-ist variety, only the agrarian revolution, and the violent overthrown of British rule, will lead to the complete social, economic, cultural and legal emancipation of the working pariahs and slaves.

"The C.P. of India calls upon all the pariahs to join in the united revolutionary front with all the workers of the country against British rule and landlordism."

E. The Struggle for the Interests of the Town and Petty Bourgeoisie

"The C.P. of India calls upon the working small producers in the towns to support the revolutionary struggle against British domination, the landlords, the princes and the moneylenders.

"The C.P. of India fight for the cancellation of all the usury which has enslaved the poor people of the towns. The C.P. of India fights for the cancellation of all direct and indirect taxes, excise and other forms of taxation of wages and small earnings which are ruining the artisans,

street traders, employees, etc. It stands for the replacement of such taxes by a progressive income-tax on the capitalists, bond holders, banks and inheritance."

F. Emancipation of the Toiling Women

"The C.P. of India fights for the complete social, economic and legal equality of women. It fights for the complete abolition of night work for women and the prohibition of underground work for women (in the coal mines) and in all branches harmful for females.

"The C.P. of India fights for leave of absence from work at full rates of wages two months before and two months after childbirth, with free medical aid, and for the establishment of creches in all factories and workshops employing women, at the expense of the employers, such chrechos to cover small children and infants at the breast, with a special appartment for feeding. Nursing mothers to have their working day reduced to 6 hours."

G. Soldiers Demands

"I. In the struggle for the emancipation of our country, the C.P. of India calls for the spreading of revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers and police, and the explanation of the necessity for their armed insurrection together with the toiling masses of the country, against British rule.

"II. The Indian soldiers and police are socially in the main poor peasants who have been forced to seek employment in the army by poverty, landlessness, and hunger. The C.P. of India fights for the allotment of land to the soldiers equally with all the other toiling peasants. The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to explain to the soldiers and ex-soldiers that the only means of acquiring land, abolishing indebtedness and getting work is the revolutionary overthrow of British and feudal supremacy.

"III. The C.P. of India calls upon its organizations and class-conscious workers and revolutionaries to begin organizing revolutionary groups among the soldiers. The aim of these groups must be to persuade and prepare the soldiers to take action in support of a general armed insurrection of the people for liberty, land, and a Workers' and Peasants' Government. It is necessary to explain to the soldiers from concrete examples drawn from their daily lives (arbitrary actions by the officers, shooting down of demonstrations, workers' strikes, etc., flagrant inequality of treatment of white and Indian soldiers--worse food, clothes, allowances, etc.) that Indian soldiers are only a blind tool in the hands of the British robbers, who use them to maintain the national and social oppression of the toiling masses of our country.

"IV. The C.P. of India calls upon its supporters to organize the ex-soldiers, who have had practical proof of the swindling and exploiting character of British rule, and to build up revolutionary ex-soldiers' organizations among them and, wherever possible, fighting detachments to prepare and support the future national insurrection and agrarian movement under the leadership of the Party."

H. Youth Demands

"I. The C.P. of India calls upon the revolutionary working class youth to build up the Young Communist League...
"II. The Y.C.L...has the special task of organizing the working class youth under the banner of Communism. The Y.C.L. of India must come forward as a political organization which subordinates all forms of struggle and mass organizations--economic, cultural, sports, etc.--to the interests of the political struggle, namely the overthrow of the imperialist yoke and the winning of power by the working class and the peasantry.

"V. With the object of protecting the toiling youth against physical and cultural degeneration, and in order to develop its revolutionary offensive for the national and social liberation of the toiling masses, the C.P. of India fights for:

a) Limitation of the working day to 6 hours for youths from 16 to 20. Prohibition of employment of children under 16.

b) Universal free and compulsory education up to 16 in the national language of the pupils. Free feeding, clothing and supply of textbooks to children at the expense of the State. Introduction of vocational training for youths at the expense of the State and the employers.

c) Paid weekly and annual (6 weeks) holiday for youths.

d) State maintenance of unemployed youths at rates equivalent to the cost of living.

"The C.P. of India declares with pride that it considers itself a part of the organized world Communist movement, a Section of the Communist International. The C.P. of India calls upon all advanced workers and revolutionaries devoted to the cause of the working class to join the ranks of the Communist Party now being built, in order to fight to carry out the historic tasks of the Indian revolution. In the conditions of British supremacy and terrorism, the Communist Party can exist and develop as an underground Party, applying and utilizing all forms of legal and illegal activity to develop its mass struggle, and to win the toiling masses for the fight for the democratic dictatorship of the working class and of the peasantry. .."